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CIA Colby, William

Commonwealth Club

# CIA Chief Speaks At S.F. Luncheon

By Jerry Carroll

Central Intelligence Agency director William Colby said yesterday he is confident the American people support spying on foreign governments as a means of keeping the United States safe.

"Our American public, with its basic good sense, recognizes that it would be dangerous to live without intelligence in a world in which we are 30 minutes away from an aimed and cocked nuclear missile," Colby said.

The 55-year-old Colby, a career specialist in what his trade calls "dirty tricks" be-

fore his appointment as CIA head nearly two years ago, spoke before a Commonwealth Club luncheon.

In his speech, Colby acknowledged that the CIA has made a "few missteps" during its 27-year history, but contended there errors are getting so much attention that the agency's record of valuable service is being overlooked.

He warned that "an hysterical focus on the nits and picks of yesterday" might so damage the CIA that U.S. security in what Colby called a dangerous world might be jeopardized.

His speech before more than 900 people came while White House commission headed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and eight Congressional committees are investigating the CIA.

The CIA director said however that he welcomes new laws more precisely spelling out the agency's mission.

The 1947 charter approved by Congress, Colby said, was "deliberately phrased in circumlocutions" and allowed the CIA more authority than perhaps was desirable.

"I fully support procedures to endure supervision, control and accountability with respect to intelligence. I only plead that these procedures also take into consideration the unique and fragile character of many sensitive intelligence operations," he said.

An aspect of the current investigations centers around charges that during the Nixon administration the CIA engaged in domestic spying, collecting dossiers on about 10,000 American dissidents and anti-war protesters.

Colby maintained that the charges are exaggerated and said that both the activities were both legal and "reflected the political character of those times."

He said he recognizes that, in a democratic society, keeping with the press in its "adversary role" with government will from time to time expose activities that the CIA would like to keep secret.